



High Tech Community Justice Global Positioning Satellite Technology

What is GPS?

GPS is a system that can pinpoint within 15 meters a person's position on Earth using 24 Global Positioning Satellites (GPS) in orbit at 11,000 nautical miles above the Earth. The satellites are owned and operated by the Department of Defense and continuously transmit signals which can be detected by anyone possessing a GPS receiver.

GPS and the Criminal Justice System:

Throughout the world, criminal justice agencies have begun using GPS to monitor targeted offenders. In many states, this technology is used to monitor sex offenders convicted of specific crimes for varying lengths of time.

In the commercial field of offender tracking there are two types of GPS. Passive GPS, which provides information regarding the whereabouts of an offender during the previous 24 hour period. This information is collected throughout the day and is then transmitted via land line telephone to a main computer which then downloads the information to the supervising Agent. Active GPS also provides information regarding the whereabouts of an offender however, this information is automatically uploaded to the main computer via cell technology periodically throughout the day. The active GPS unit can also be "pinged" by the supervising Agent at any time, provided that there is adequate cell coverage, so that the offender's location can be ascertained very rapidly.

What Are the Advantages of GPS in Community Supervision?

- GPS is a relatively inexpensive alternative to incarceration for high risk offenders.
- GPS allows offenders an opportunity to continue working in the community, paying taxes, supporting their families and living at home.
- Using GPS, Agents can create an "electronic perimeter" around specific areas designating them as "off limits" to offenders. These are called "exclusion zones" or "hot zones."
- Victims can be notified when offenders enter their established perimeters.
- The features and reliability of GPS equipment can be a deterrent to future criminal activity.